



October 5, 2005

Dear Community Friends:

Laundry Room Burglaries

One of the trends we saw over the summer was a sharp increase in apartment building laundry room burglaries. Since May 2005, there have been nearly 40 of these laundry room break-ins. The perpetrator would gain access to the laundry room in a number of ways, often by exerting force on a door or window. Once inside, the perpetrator would vandalize the machines to get the coin boxes. In many cases, the hoses and cords of the machines were also cut. The cost of the damage done to the machines far outstripped the amount of money the perpetrators got from the machines.

The good news is that just after midnight the morning of Wednesday, September 21st, our Third Watch Officers arrested the perpetrator of these laundry room break-ins. **A citizen called in about a burglary in progress.** Officers responded to the scene and though the perpetrator attempted to elude officers by hiding in a storage unit, he was apprehended. Officers knew this was the guy. Not only did he have the tools he used to cut the hoses and cords and remove the coin boxes, he also had 62 quarters in his pocket.

We appreciate the citizen who called 911 and lead us to the perpetrator. Without her, this perpetrator could still be committing burglaries and costing property owners thousands of dollars in machine replacement and repair costs. **Thank You!!**

We also want to acknowledge the work of the officers involved in the arrest. They were Officers **C. Christman, M. Griffin, G. Osborn, M. Russey** and **A. Thorp**. **Thank You!!**

Prevention Measures

Some of you live in, manage or own multi-family residences and have coin operated laundry facilities.

Therefore, we thought to include some prevention steps for you to consider:

- Change the locks on the laundry room doors. In some of these burglaries, the perpetrator appeared to access the laundry rooms using a key, perhaps one acquired from a former tenant.
- Educate residents about ensuring the laundry rooms remain locked. In the incident where the perpetrator was arrested, he relayed to the officers that the laundry room door was unlocked.
- Restrict laundry room hours and double lock them after those hours with a sturdy deadbolt lock. Ensure to post the hours.
- Have the resident manager make regular rounds through the laundry room.
- My personal favorite.... get rid of the coin-operated machines all together. Put in regular machines, still have them in a lockable room and tack on an additional \$10-20 a month rent to cover the expense. This would be more cost effective than repairing or replacing \$500 washers and dryers over and over because someone trashed them to get a couple of bucks work of change.

Vehicle Anti Theft Device Available at a Discounted Price

Seattle Neighborhood Group (SNG) has partnered with Safeco Insurance to purchase a large number of vehicle anti-theft devices - The Club. If you live in a Seattle Zip Code, you can contact SNG and purchase The Club from them at a reduced cost. Two sizes are available and there is a limit of two per household. Contact 206.323.9666 or email kay@sngi.org for details.

Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, SPD South Precinct Crime Prevention